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9 November 1950

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MILITARY CONTRIBUTION
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

INDO-CHINA

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I. The Setting

A. Strategic Importance of Indo-China to the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

1. Military.

a. Indo-China has assumed military importance to the U.S. because of its geographic location as a possible barrier to, or passageway for, the extension of Communist military-political control over mainland Southeast Asia. Prior to the Korean war, Indo-China was the major area of direct military conflict in Asia between the West and Communism, and since September 1950 has assumed even greater importance to the U. S. because of the increased Viet Minh capabilities in relation to the French military effort to suppress the Viet Minh movement. In view of the general U. S. policy to contain Communism, the deterioration of the French position has a direct bearing on the nature and extent of U. S. military efforts to prevent Communist domination of Indo-China.

b. The military importance of Indo-China to the U.S.S.R. lies almost entirely in its geographic position. From the defensive point of view in wartime, Communist control of Indo-China would deny to the United States and its allies a potential air and naval base from which targets of military importance within Communist-held territory could be attacked or from which Communist sea communications could be interdicted. At the same time, such control would give the U.S.S.R. the capability of using Indo-China as an air and naval base for mounting attacks against targets within territory held by the United States and its allies or against their air and sea communications.

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(1) General. The magnitude of the French military effort in Indo-China can be judged from the following facts:

(a) The French Regular Army in Indo-China comprises 49 percent of France's career enlisted personnel*; 20 percent of her Regular Army Officers; and 28 percent of her career NCO's, a commitment which reduces France's contribution to the Western Union;

(b) French officer losses (killed or missing) in Indo-China equal the annual output of graduates from St. Cyr;

(c) \$556,000,000, or 37 percent of the 1949 French military budget, was spent on the Indo-China operation; and

(d) the French are supporting a total of 350,000 men in units ranging from Regular armed forces to part-time village and "self-defense" units, all of whom are engaged, in one way or another, in attempting to establish security in the face of Viet Minh guerrilla warfare.

(2) French Ground Forces, Far East (Forces Terrestres en Extreme Orient, FTEO)

(a) Strength and Composition. The FTEO has an approximate strength of 145,000 composed as follows:

* Virtually no French conscripts are sent to Indo-China.

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French	49,000
Foreign Legion	16,500
North African	22,500
Senegalese	14,000
Indo-Chinese	<u>43,000</u> (regularly enlisted)
TOTAL	145,000

(b) Dispositions*

Tonkin	53,000
Annam	23,500
Cochin-China	56,000
Laos	7,000
Cambodia	<u>5,500</u>
TOTAL	145,000

(c) Capabilities. The FTEO, with troops and equipment presently available, is sorely pressed by the requirements of its dual mission:

i. Defense of Indo-China against possible Chinese Communist invasion; and

ii. continued operations against the Viet Minh. Except for Chinese equipped Viet Minh, the FTEO is generally considered better equipped, trained, led and supplied than the Viet Minh. However, the difficulties of operating against guerrillas, shortages of materiel, spare parts, and replacements have kept the French generally on the defensive. At present, the FTEO is considered to have no great offensive capabilities, and is indeed being forced by Viet Minh pressure to contract its defense lines in Tonkin. Elsewhere in Indo-China, the FTEO is decreasingly able to conduct even limited offensives because of the necessity for diverting troops to Tonkin.

* See map on page _____

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The contraction of French forces into the Red River Delta area of Tonkin will make the French defense task easier, not only because of the concentration of forces in a smaller area, but also because the terrain is much more suited to operation of armor and tactical air. In the recent northeast Tonkin border fighting, the tactical advantages were all on the side of the Viet Minh. In the Delta area, however, the French will be able to make a stronger defense, with their present strength, than they have in the frontier zones. The continued French ability to maintain control depends on the inter-relationship of the further build-up of the Viet Minh by the Chinese Communists and the acceleration and increase of United States aid to the French.

(3) French Naval Forces, Far East (Forces Maritimes en Extreme Orient, FMEO) French naval forces in Indo-China consist of 8,750 personnel, 160 small craft and ships, including landing craft presently arriving from the United States as part of MDAP for Fiscal Year 1950, and 21 aircraft. Headquarters of the naval forces and their main operating and repair base are situated at Saigon. Secondary bases are established at Haiphong, Port Wallut and Phat Diem in Tonkin; at Tourane, Quang Khe, Dong Hoi, Faifo and Nha Trang in Annam; at Cape St. Jacques, Ream, and Poulo Condore in Cochinchina; and at Phnom Penh in Cambodia.

Although most of the naval equipment is obsolescent, it is considered adequate for the task of supporting the army in small-scale amphibious operations, of conducting raids against the Viet Minh-held areas along

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the Indo-China coast, and of patrolling the inland waterways. The inability of the FMEO to maintain a complete blockade is demonstrated by the fact that arms are smuggled in at numerous points along the coast. In the event of an all-out Viet Minh offensive in northern Indo-China, it is not believed that the FMEO would be able to prevent entirely the landing of personnel and supplies from Hainan.

(4) French Air Forces, Far East (Forces Aeriennes en Extreme Orient, FAEEO).

(a) The FAEEO, which is severely strained by its actions against the Viet Minh forces, has a strength of 83 fighter and fighter-reconnaissance aircraft, 68

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transports, and 50 liaison planes. The level of serviceability of fighter aircraft, now about 50 percent, probably will continue to drop as maintenance shortages become more acute. Serviceability of transport aircraft, is rising through supply by MDAP. The French air installations, which are few in number and generally in poor condition, are vulnerable to sabotage and some even to direct Viet Minh attack.

(b) French Air Force Capabilities.

i. It is estimated that the French in Indo-China have a maximum airlift capability of approximately 765 paratroops, 132 less than the T/O strength of a paratroop battalion. During the first week of maximum operations, the French could lift about 2,517 men, or approximately three of their six airborne battalions, assuming aerial resupply at the rate of 50 pounds per man day necessary to keep these troops in action. Subsequently, the task of resupplying the forces already dropped would require practically the total airlift capacity, assuming that juncture had not been made with ground forces by this time.

ii. French air facilities in Indo-China are relatively few and are generally in poor condition. There are only four airfields in Tonkin (one at Haiphong and three in the vicinity of Hanoi) that can be used by the French for airlift missions into the critical northern border area. These four airfields are the only airfields available to the French in Tonkin which approach USAF standards for fighter bases. Several other airstrips in the northern operational zone might be used under extremely adverse conditions. Although the French air facilities are

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somewhat better in central and southern Indo-China, some are vulnerable to Viet Minh attack, and others, such as the airfield at Vinh, are in Viet Minh hands.

iii. It is estimated that the intensification of Viet Minh attacks, even without the support of the Chinese Communist Air Force, will quickly over-burden the already strained French air capability with a consequent steady decrease in air support effectiveness.

(5) Indigenous Pro-French Forces.

(a) The Armies of the Associated States, which, because of the present military situation, remain under control of the French, have a total paper strength of 66,700.

i. The Vietnam Army has a total strength of 57,200. This consists of a mobile force of nine battalions (7,500), of which only five (about 4,200 troops) are operational; the North, Central, and South Vietnam Guards (20,700), used primarily for static defense and pacification tasks; and the auxiliaries (29,000), recruited on a temporary basis and lightly armed, which are used in assisting local authorities to maintain order in their home areas.

ii. The Laotian Army totals 2,600, and consists of a gendarmerie (eleven provincial companies) and one mobile battalion.

iii. The Cambodian Army has a total strength of 6,900, and consists of three mobile battalions and local auxiliary units.

(b) Miscellaneous Units. In addition to the Armies of the Associated States, there are 122,500 other indigenous forces, under over-all French control, which can best be described as miscellaneous auxiliary or partisan

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formations, generally ill-equipped and sometimes of questionable loyalty. Examples of these are various militant religious groups, such as the Cao Daists; railway guards; village "self-defense" units; and the mountaineer tribes in southern Annam.

(c) Build-Up of Indigenous Forces

i. The build-up of these native troops into an efficient fighting force has the greatest political and military merit. Native troops, because of familiarity with the terrain, climate, language, and social life, are better suited to conduct anti-guerrilla operations than are regular French forces. From the political point of view, the early establishment of truly independent national armies would be concrete evidence of French sincerity in making concessions to Vietnamese nationalist aspirations.

ii. The training of the requisite corps of native officers cannot be done overnight. There is at present no central Vietnamese headquarters or staff; service units are as yet in the formative stage; and only about 375 Vietnamese officers have been graduated from the Vietnam Officers' School. As late as June 1950, only three of the nine combat battalions in the Vietnam Army were entirely officered by Vietnamese.

iii. The second major difficulty is that, until the Vietnamese gain confidence in French efforts to prepare them for actual independence, and until such time as Bao Dai appears to be a real rival to Ho Chi Minh as a nationalist leader, the reliability of Vietnamese personnel is open to serious question. Moreover, young Vietnamese with the necessary qualifications of education and leadership are reluctant to make the political commitment of siding openly with

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Bao Dai. Ho Chi Minh has been fighting the nationalist, anti-French battle for five years, with a considerable degree of success. That fact still takes precedence, in the eyes of many Vietnamese, over the Communist danger that Ho Chi Minh represents.

iv. The third major problem is the financing of further military efforts in building up native forces which might eventually free French regular troops for duties elsewhere. French requests for United States financial support to solve this problem are being accelerated.

(6) United States Military Aid

(a) Army. The total amount appropriated under MDAP for the Fiscal Year 1950 to French Union Ground Forces in Indo-China is \$13,228,743. Materiel provided under this program includes ordnance, engineer, and signal equipment primarily for 12 Indo-Chinese battalions infantry (8 Vietnamese, 3 Cambodian, and 1 Laotian), but also for the FTEO. The materiel has mostly been delivered and deliveries will be completed by January 1951.

Under the Fiscal Year 1951 program, French Union Ground Forces will receive \$55,000,000 in MDAP. Materiel to be shipped includes signal, armored, engineer, and medical equipment; ammunition; POL; unit equipment for 4 infantry battalions, 3 combat engineer battalions, 2 ordnance supply companies, 1 parachute maintenance company, and other smaller units; and maintenance items for motor transport, engineer, artillery, signal, and medical units already existing. Substantial deliveries of materiel and supplies under this program are not expected for five to six months.

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(b) Navy. The total amount appropriated under MDAP for Fiscal Year 1950 to French Union Naval Forces in Indo-China is \$13,457,999. Materiel provided under this program, delivery of which has been completed, includes 40 fighter aircraft (F6F), 36 Landing Craft (LCVP), 6 Landing Support Vessels (LSSL), and 2 Patrol Craft (PC).

The amount appropriated under Fiscal Year 1951 to these forces is \$43,000,000. Materiel to be delivered within six months consists of 10 Privateer aircraft; 14 harbor tugs (YTL); 1 submarine chaser (SC); 6 submarine chasers (PC); 53 landing craft, 1 oiler (YOG); 1 repair ship (ARL); and spare parts. The Privateers are presently being flown in.

(c) Air. The total amount appropriated under MDAP for Fiscal Year 1950 to the French Union Air Forces in Indo-China is \$3,722,544. Materiel includes 8 C-47 aircraft, with 16 spare engines, one year's supply of spare parts, and maintenance equipment; and equipment and ammunition for F-63 aircraft, including 75 spare engines, 400 wing tanks, selected spare parts, and 154,000 rounds of 37-mm ammunition. The C-47 aircraft, spare engines, a nine-month level of C-47 spare parts, approximately 15 percent of the maintenance equipment, and the aircraft ammunition have been delivered. Remaining items are in transit or will be shipped by 15 March 1951.

Under the Fiscal Year 1951 MDAP, the French Air Forces in Indo-China will receive approximately \$35,000,000 in military aid. This materiel will include 90 F8F's; 30 B-26's; 10 fuel servicing units; 2,000 napalm bombs; 5,500 500-lb. G. P. bombs; 16,800 250-lb. G.P. bombs; 1,000,000 rounds of cal. 50 ammunition;

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2,000,000 rounds of 20-mm ammunitions; and POL supplies.

None of the aircraft and fuel servicing units will be available for shipment during the next 60 days, except the B-26's and only negligible quantities of other items will be available for shipment within that period. All items, however, are scheduled for shipment within six months.

(d) General. While MDAP aid is being sent to Indo-China under the highest priority, and this materiel will, when it arrives, increase somewhat the capabilities of the French and native allied forces, the full impact of this program will not be felt for several months. Furthermore, aid sent under the Fiscal Year 1951 program may not keep pace with Chinese Communist aid to Viet Minh, which has been growing ever since the Chinese Communists extended their control last winter to the border in Tonkin.

b. The Viet Minh

(1) Strength and Composition. The Viet Minh Army numbers 107,500 regulars, organized into regiments and battalions, supplemented by approximately 130,000 auxiliaries, known as the People's Militia. One-fourth (33,000) of the latter are lightly armed, part-time troops, used as internal security forces and as support for the regulars in guerrilla operations. These troops are in organized units.

(2) Dispositions. The following table shows the disposition of Viet Minh troops:

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	<u>Regulars</u>		<u>People's Militia (Organized Units)</u>	
	<u>Strength</u>	<u>No. of Bns</u>	<u>Strength</u>	<u>No. of Bns</u>
Tonkin	55,000	106	14,000	28
Annam	22,000	46	9,000	18
Cochin-China	21,000	41	10,000	20
Laos	5,000	?	?	?
Cambodia	<u>4,500</u>	<u>?</u>	<u>?</u>	<u>?</u>
Total	107,500	193	33,000	66

(3) Capabilities.

(a) General. The Viet Minh forces, during five years of war against the French, have shown primarily guerrilla warfare capabilities. The Viet Minh holds major, though not the most vital, portions of Vietnam, and carries on guerrilla attacks against French and native allied posts and watchtowers in numerous parts of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The recent Viet Minh offensive in Tonkin, however, has shown that, at least in this area, the Viet Minh, with Chinese Communist assistance, is changing from a guerrilla army into a dangerous striking force. The Viet Minh has successfully exploited the advantages of concentration of mass against weaker French forces, and has at the same time carried out diversionary actions on widely separated fronts to disperse available French mobile reserves. The Viet Minh has willingly given up unimportant ground when pressed. Its troops have apparently received excellent artillery training, and have made effective, coordinated use of six battalions of field artillery in the recent frontier fighting. An attack on a column of seven French battalions withdrawing from the key border post of Caobang in October 1950 demonstrated Viet Minh capabilities of exploiting terrain advantages and of attacking at numerous points along the route in order to prevent mutual support by French elements. Viet Minh intelligence has been excellent.

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(b) Chinese Communist Build-Up of the Viet Minh

1. Since the early months of 1950, a Chinese Communist program to build up the capabilities of the Viet Minh has been in operation. A general plan has apparently been formulated, including the following points:

- (i) Supply of materiel;
- (ii) provision of technical advisors;
- (iii) training of Viet Minh units;
- (iv) infiltration and integration of specialized Chinese Communist units into the Viet Minh; and
- (v) possibly, provision for Chinese Communist intervention in the event of a major French offensive.

ii. Materiel. While evidence sufficient to establish the fact of a pattern of material aid over the last six to eight months is lacking, reports for certain periods within that span of time indicate that substantial quantities of small arms, and small quantities of light field and anti-aircraft artillery, have been furnished to the Viet Minh from Communist China. Such reports do not take into account, of course, undetected transfers, the re-equipment of Viet Minh units on Chinese soil, or arms received from Thai and Philippines sources*. In addition, Hainan Island is assuming greater importance as an arms supply point for the Viet Minh. Improvements of roads in South China and in Tonkin, establishment of supply dumps, and repair and improvement of airfields on both sides of the border, all indicate that continually increasing aid will be obtained from the Chinese

* See map on page ____, for arms routes into Viet Minh territory.

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Communists. The reduction of the line of French border posts*, which hamper but do not prevent arms movement, will permit the flow of heavy equipment in greatly increased quantities, and with little detection by the French, along the major roads. This phase of the Viet Minh offensive against the French has been underway since 16 September, and is largely completed.

iii. Training. Integration into Viet Minh units of Chinese Communist training cadres, wearing Viet Minh insignia and ostensibly coming under Viet Minh leadership, is believed already to have taken place. A more important aspect of the training problem, however, is the movement of large numbers of Viet Minh personnel to training camps in South China**. Such units, which are believed to wear Chinese Communist insignia during their period of training, leave their equipment behind in Indo-China and are re-equipped in South China. It is estimated that training facilities in these areas can accommodate 20,000 troops, and that at least 35,000 have received, or are receiving, such training. In addition to general infantry instruction by the Chinese Communists, Soviet personnel reportedly are training Viet Minh artillery, tank, and possibly air crews in South China.

iv. Integration of Chinese Communists. There are believed to be small numbers of Chinese Communist training cadres and advisors, possibly down to the battalion and company level, within some Viet Minh units. There is no firm indication of the integration of Chinese units into the Viet Minh Army. This

* See map on page ___, for locations of principal border posts.

** See map on page ___, for location of training areas in South China.

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method of assistance must be anticipated, however, as a positive means of providing support and services now limited or unavailable to the Viet Minh. Elements most acceptable and likely to be provided would be specialized units, such as artillery, tank, engineer, signal, and medical. It is unlikely that units larger than battalions would be integrated for fear of revealing direct Chinese Communist operational involvement.

(c) The Role of the U.S.S.R. Soviet assistance to the Ho Chi Minh regime appears thus far to have been limited to indirect support by encouraging, permitting, or ordering utilization of Chinese Communist resources. There are few confirmed reports of the actual presence of Soviet personnel. There have been unconfirmed reports of Soviet advisors working with the Chinese Communists in South China and Hainan Island, in connection with arms supply for the Viet Minh, and with development of harbor facilities at Yulin (Hainan), with the training of Viet Minh artillery, tank and even aircraft crews. It appears probable that this indirect Soviet method of supporting the Viet Minh, utilizing Chinese Communist resources, will continue, as opposed to any direct Soviet intervention.

II. Courses of Action Open to Communist China and the U.S.S.R.

A. Aid to the Viet Minh in terms of materiel, advice and training on the present scale.

1. Probability of this course of action. It seems certain that the direct assistance to the Viet Minh rendered by the Chinese Communists, and the indirect assistance of the U.S.S.R. as indicated in IBI above, will at least continue. The decision had obviously been made for the Chinese Communists

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to extend such aid; and in view of the success which the bolstered Viet Minh forces have been able to achieve in Tonkin during the past two months, there is no reason to suppose that such aid will stop. On the contrary, with the French loss of frontier posts, the Chinese Communists will be able to furnish increasing amounts of heavy equipment, probably including heavy artillery and light armored equipment.

2. Consequences of this course of action.

a. In Indo-China. It is felt that continued shipments of Chinese Communist military aid to the Viet Minh and continued training of Viet Minh units in South China will give the Viet Minh the capability to launch a second-phase offensive against the Red River Delta by Spring 1951, unless the French capabilities have been increased significantly by that time. Any sign of French weakness, however, will be exploited virologously by the Viet Minh. If the Viet Minh offensive is delayed further, an increase in French efforts, assisted by MDAP, may permit a successful defense of the Delta, with a subsequent long-term build-up of the forces of the Associated States and a resumption of the offensive. If, however, Chinese Communist build-up of the Viet Minh outpaces French build-up, the Viet Minh will eventually succeed in defeating the French in Tonkin. Such a loss would have grave military consequences. Nevertheless, it should be possible for the French then to establish a defense line across the waist of Indo-China. This line might hold for some time, unless by-passed by a deliberate violation of the borders of Thailand by Viet Minh and associated forces. Such violation is deemed unlikely unless there is an open intervention by Chinese Communist forces. There is also the possibility of a by-pass of the French line of defense by an amphibious operation staged from Hainan. Delaying action on this waistline could permit the

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French to build-up for a return by sea to Tonkin. However, heavy Viet Minh attacks and sabotage against French rear areas would decrease French front-line strength. The loss of this line would permit the Viet Minh forces to move into southern Annam and Cambodia, forcing the French to withdraw their remaining forces to the Saigon area.

b. In other countries of Southeast Asia. The pattern of military developments indicated in a above would undoubtedly have long-term military repercussions in Southeast Asia. Extension of Viet Minh military influence into Thailand, the development of Communist guerrilla movements in Thailand, and the probable direction of Chinese Communist effort to Burma, would be followed by a strengthening of the Communist insurgents in Malaya. In general, assuming no Western action to prevent further Communist control, should Indo-China fall, Communist military domination of the mainland of Southeast Asia could be anticipated as a long-term development.

B. Aid as in A. above, plus relatively large-scale incorporation of Chinese Communist forces into the Viet Minh Army.

1. Probability of this course of action. The Chinese Communists will probably not now utilize any significant numbers of troops or types of military units within the Viet Minh Army. This estimate could change rapidly, however, if French capabilities showed evidence of rapid improvement, since the Chinese Communists could then move forces into Indo-China, on the present Korean pattern, which would probably be able to counterbalance such increased French capabilities.

2. Consequences of this course. The pattern of events indicated under II A 2 a, above, could be greatly accelerated should the Chinese Communists integrate their forces on a large-scale with the Viet Minh Army.

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C. Overt Invasion of Indo-China with Major Chinese Communist Forces

1. Probability of this course of action. There is no firm indication that the Chinese Communists intend overtly to invade Indo-China for the present, despite the presence of approximately 100,000 Chinese Communist troops deployed sufficiently close to the border to be capable of invading Tonkin without warning. The principal controlling factor in question would appear to be the current successes of the Viet Minh, as aided by the Chinese Communist training and equipment program. Even should this level of assistance prove insufficient in the face of increasing French capabilities in the long term, a course short of the overt commitment of major Chinese Communist forces would be open to the Chinese Communists (II B, above). This course would probably be successful unless the West made the drastic decision to spare no military effort to save the French position.

2. Consequences of this course. With the presently available or with immediately foreseeable French strength, the French could not withstand such an invasion successfully, at least during 1950. Chinese Communist forces, aided by the Viet Minh, probably could overrun Tonkin within six weeks, although the French might be able to retain a beachhead temporarily in the Haiphong Delta area. Firm and continued control of the Delta would depend on assistance provided by the United States, and possibly, Great Britain, because of the inadequacy of French resources. The further the battlefield becomes removed from the mountainous border region, the better will be the opportunity to isolate the battlefield, interdict lines of communication and exploit the advantages of tactical air support.

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A second-phase Chinese Communist drive into Annam would require additional troops, which are available in areas south of the Yangtze River. In view of the Chinese Communists' improving capability for waterlift, some invasion forces might be moved by sea to Viet Minh-held areas of the Annam coast. There is no firm evidence, however, of Chinese Communist preparations for such a move.

Although there have been no indications of any significant build-up of the Chinese Communist Air Force strength in Southwest China, and although this air force has not yet appeared in combat, the estimated 200 to 250 operational combat types available to this force could furnish air support for an invasion of Indo-China. There are 6 airfields within 170 miles of the Tonkin border. In addition, construction of new fields and the restoration of others in the border area and on Hainan Island reportedly are in progress.

III. Courses of Action Open to the West.

A. France

1. Possible Courses of Action

a. Continuation of the "static defense". French military measures in Indo-China, which generally have overshadowed political efforts to solve the Indo-China problem, have in the past been designed to:

(1) Guard the security of the areas which they have liberated from the Viet Minh guerrilla, sabotage, and terrorist activities;

(2) prevent, as far as possible, Chinese Communist and other military supplies from reaching the Viet Minh;

(3) deny rice-producing areas to the Viet Minh;

(4) liberate and pacify additional areas and to establish Vietnamese, Cambodian, or Laotian civil administrations in these areas;

(5) preserve a mobile reserve in Tonkin to counter an enemy offensive from the north.

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This general military policy has, in the main, been defensive. Specific weaknesses in French military methods have been:

(1) A command organization, designed to deal with guerrillas rather than the comparatively efficient Viet Minh striking force, which now is emerging. The French forces, although of high individual quality, have lacked the necessary flexibility, particularly in Tonkin, to cope with large-scale mobile Viet Minh operations.

(2) Undue control of operations by Paris, which has slowed vital decisions, has sapped the initiative of local commanders, and has lowered the morale of certain senior commanders, almost to the breaking point.

(3) Faulty French intelligence, which has under-estimated Viet Minh capabilities.

(4) Undue dispersion of French forces in static commitments, resulting in unsuccessful attempts to hold ground and an inability to maintain a mobile defense and adequate reserves.

(5) The obsolescence of much French equipment, particularly ground and air force equipment, and a grave lack of spare parts for this equipment.

(6) Shortages of armor, artillery, certain types of ammunition, vehicles, radio equipment, and modern aircraft.

(7) Failure to appreciate the urgent necessity of granting liberal political concessions, particularly to Vietnam.

(8) Lack of many equipment items, which could have a significant effect upon anti-Viet Minh operations, e.g., automatic weapons, recoilless rifles, bazookas, flame throwers, anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, napalm bombs, and light bomber aircraft.

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(9) The tendency to distrust the political reliability of the forces of the Associated States and to relegate them to comparatively minor defense roles, together with an apparent lack of desire to utilize this important source of manpower in front-line operations.

Despite these weaknesses, the morale of most French units has remained surprisingly high, French combat officers and non-commissioned officers are of high quality, French troops are seasoned and experienced, and there are many able senior officers.

b. Changeover to an Aggressive, Mobile Defense. The one school of thought, led by General Alphonse Juin, who has just returned from an inspection tour of Indo-China, holds that a more mobile defense should be adopted. Juin's view is that the short-term policy should be the further strengthening of morale, and that present French forces should suffice to hold positions in the Delta pending a build-up for offensive operations in Spring 1951. Juin feels that immediate steps should be taken to accelerate the build-up of the Vietnam Army to a strength of 150,000.

Juin's recommendation for a long-term policy would envisage re-establishment of control of the frontier and re-occupation of the abandoned forts. For these tasks an additional 50,000 men would be needed, in addition to considerable new equipment, particularly aircraft and artillery. Such a policy would probably also mean the reorganization of French units into regimental combat teams in order to conduct highly aggressive and mobile operations, including air-supported counterattacks against Viet Minh concentrations, installations, and lines of communication. It would also mean reduction of static defense commitments to a minimum, which might result in local Viet Minh successes.

In general, many of these measures will be dependent upon the receipt of the promised United States MDAP.

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c. Changeover to Policy of Contraction. A succession of set-backs and minor defeats in Tonkin during the early spring months of 1949, coupled with the rapid advance of Chinese Communist troops, made it necessary that drastic steps be taken by the French High Command. Therefore, General Georges REVERS, French Army Chief of Staff, was sent to Indo-China to study the situation and to make such necessary changes as might be indicated. His tour of inspection was completed in June 1949.

In general, he recommended a contraction of the ground forces into three key areas, namely, the Red River Delta in the north, the Hue area in Central Annam and the Cochinchina area in the south. Some increase in troop strength was recommended and the build-up of Indo-Chinese forces for internal pacification was urged. French ground forces once freed from this latter responsibility, could carry on a more mobile type of warfare against the Viet Minh. Revers thus envisaged a military holding operation while the political problems were being resolved, and defended his position by contending that a military resolution would require at least 200,000 men and extensive materiel. This plan he regarded as a compromise between the needs of Indo-China and those of Western European defenses.

Since that time the Army General Staff has inclined to this point of view by contending that no vital areas would be relinquished in Indo-China and that the manpower needs of Western Europe would not be sacrificed.

Since General REVER's removal as Chief of Staff in December 1949, the views of the Army General Staff have been over-ridden in favor of a combination of political considerations and contentions of the French Commander-in-Chief in Indo-China.

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During the visit to the United States by Lt. General Clement BLANC in October 1950, the views of the Army General Staff were re-emphasized. General Blanc declared that the ground forces in Indo-China should be withdrawn into key areas, more mobile type of tactics should be adopted and the pacification of internal areas should be turned over to native forces. He contended that these measures would permit the return to France of 50,000 troops.

d. French Withdrawal from Indo-China. The probability of French withdrawal at the present time is slight, but should the French be forced to make such economic and political concessions in Indo-China that they no longer consider the game to be "worth the candle," they might well withdraw entirely from the area. In such a situation the French could justify their action by pointing up the urgency of their commitments in Western Europe. While such drastic action is not presently anticipated, there have been a sufficient number of remarks attributed to important Frenchmen along this line as to confirm that such a thought is in the back of the French mind.

If the French should decide to turn over absolute sovereignty to the Associated States, to turn over the responsibility for Indo-Chinese security and defense to the National Armies of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, and to withdraw French regular armed forces completely, without reference to the United Nations, the consequence would be an extension of Viet Minh Communist military control over all of Vietnam at an early date, and subsequently over Cambodia and Laos. The military resources and capabilities of the Associated States would be insufficient to prevent this development.

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Should France or the Associated States, upon French withdrawal, request United Nations intervention, the United Nations might require the use of UN troops (particularly from the United States) to assist in fighting the Viet Minh. The United States might thus be drawn unwillingly into a second Asiatic conflict which would require a major military effort if a recurrence of the present military failure in Indo-China were to be avoided.

While complete French withdrawal would be interpreted by many Asiatics as a victory for Ho Chi Minh, such withdrawal if properly exploited propagandawise, should result in greater Asiatic support for Bao Dai than under the present circumstances of limited Vietnamese independence.

e. Probability of adoption of any one course of action indicated above, or any combination or compromise. It is likely that a compromise plan will be adopted. Through the use of greatly increased aid in U. S. arms and equipment, an attempt will be made to revert to more mobile warfare; however, it is likely that the views of the Army General Staff will prevail in protest against further large-scale personnel reinforcements going to Indo-China at the expense of Continental France's defense needs. It is improbable that France will withdraw from Indo-China at this time.

f. Consequences of this course. Under this compromise policy, French combat effectiveness will be increased in the coming months. However, such an increase may not keep pace with increasing Viet Minh capabilities. While a stronger French defense of the Delta can thus be made, it is by no means certain that the French can hold out in Tonkin indefinitely under the anticipated circumstances set forth above.

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